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ABSTRACT

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) recently provided school improvement assistance to the Chicago Public Schools. As part of its work, the NWREL reviewed 39 national reform reports in order to summarize the research findings on effective principals and teachers, curriculum, equity, partnerships and responsibilities, parent involvement, funding, school organization and structure, instruction, and support services. This report is a result of that effort. Each recommendation under each of the sections is followed by a number, referring to a numbered bibliography of the national reform reports from which the recommendations are derived. (TE)

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ED297461

THE Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

PROGRAM REPORT

Summary of National Reform Recommendations

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Prepared for the

Chicago School Reform Design Project

by the

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

December 31, 1987

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PREFACE

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) recently provided school improvement assistance to the Chicago Public Schools. As part of its work, NWREL reviewed 39 national reform reports in order to summarize the research findings on effective principals and teachers, curriculum, equity, partnerships/responsibilities, parent involvement, funding, school organization/structure, instruction, and support services. This report is the result of that effort.

PRINCIPALS

Several reform reports suggest that the principal is a key figure in successful school reform. They also indicate that principal skills should be improved. (1, 12, 29, 33, 34, 38) More specific comments fall into the following categories:

Responsibilities

- Principals should be responsible for instructional programs in their schools. (12)
- Principals should be head teachers in their schools. (3)
- Principals should have more control over budgets, resource allocation and selection and rewarding of teachers. (4)

Recruitment

- States should set high standards for recruiting principals. (1, 12, 38)
- More women and minorities should be encouraged to compete for positions. (23, 38)
- State boards and districts should expand efforts to encourage women and minorities to compete for administrative positions. (28, 38)

Training

- Principals should receive the same core training as teachers do. (4)
- Principals benefit by meeting and sharing with one another. (33)
- States should set high standards for training principals. (1, 12, 38)
- Leadership and management skills of school leaders should be improved. (1, 12, 29, 33, 38)
- State boards should establish programs for improving leadership and management skills. Such programs are being initiated in 42 states. These include principals; academies and institutes, state-sponsored workshops, pilot training programs, building leadership teams, and more emphasis generally on professional development. Businesses are also providing opportunities for principals to learn management skills. (1, 38)

Compensation/Recognition

- Pay for principals should be related to their responsibilities and effectiveness. (12, 38)

PRINCIPALS (cont)

Accountability

- States should set high standards for monitoring principals. (1, 12, 38)
- District evaluation of administrators should be improved. (26)

Constraints

- Principals do not have enough time to be instructional leaders. (18)

TEACHERS

Some reports emphasize the critical importance of quality teachers to success of students in school. The majority of the suggestions about teachers and teaching fall into the following categories:

Responsibilities/Practices

- Teachers should have higher expectations for themselves and their students. (4)
- Teachers should be exempt from monitoring halls, lunchrooms, etc. (4, 33)
- Teachers should teach four classes a day and spend one period helping individual students and small groups. (4)

Recruitment/Selection

- States and local districts should improve teacher recruitment. (12, 16, 22, 26, 39)
- The federal government should help raise admission standards. (26)
- Prospective teachers should meet high education standards, demonstrate aptitude for teaching, and demonstrate competence in an academic discipline. (12, 22, 29, 32, 38)
- A 3.0 grade-point average should be required for entry into a teacher-education program. (4)
- A top priority must be retraining, obtaining, and retaining high quality math, science teachers. (32)
- States should tighten procedures for deciding who to retain and dismiss. (12, 33)
- More minority teachers should be recruited. (10, 22, 30, 31)
- Minority teachers should be recruited by forgiving college loans, establishing teacher cadet programs to attract minority high school students to teaching, and providing assistance by private industry minority recruitment experts. (31)
- To attract top teacher candidates, a system of college scholarships, loans, and tuition reductions should be considered. (16, 26, 38)
- Full-tuition scholarships should be offered to the top 5 percent of students going into teaching. (4)
- It is essential that teachers be chosen who have the desire and expertise to work with disadvantaged youngsters. (8, 33)

TEACHERS (cont)

Credentialing

- Credentialing should be separate from college and require a written examination and references. (4)

- The majority of members on the state board of examiners should be senior teachers. (4)

- State certification rules should be flexible enough to encourage qualified individuals from business, industry, science, technology, and institutions of higher learning to serve in the public schools. (4,12, 29, 32, 38)

Training

- Teachers should be trained to work with parents. (10)

- States should substantially restructure and upgrade teacher training curricula. (6, 12, 26)

- The federal government should help raise admission standards for training curricula and promote school-college partnerships. (26)

- States should institute a review of teacher training programs, to be repeated in three- to five-year cycles. (38)

- Teacher training programs should be judged on the performance of their graduates. (29)

- Teachers' core learning should be in an academic area. (4, 32)

- A liberal education is the best preparation for teachers, including elementary science and mathematics teachers. (3, 32)

- Both elementary and secondary teachers should be computer literate. (32)

- Enlist top scientific minds for teacher training and curriculum development. (11, 26)

- Teachers working with at-risk and handicapped youngsters should be given periodic inservice training aimed at specific needs and designed with their help. (28, 33)

- Successful schools use staff development or inservice training to realize their objectives. This training is most successful when targeted at specific goals. (10, 34)

- Provide teacher training in multicultural education and different learning styles. (10, 28, 30)

- Professional development programs should train all school staff in methods that will increase student retention. (31)

TEACHERS (cont)

Evaluation/Accountability

Compensation/Incentives/Recognition

- A national master teachers program should be established by the federal government to recognize and reward excellence and keep excellent teachers in the classroom. Master teachers would be awarded say a $40,000 grant each year for five years. One year would be devoted to professional improvement and the other four to teaching and helping other teachers. (39)

- Federal fellowships should be awarded to talented teachers for one year of study, followed by at least two years of teaching. (26)

- Each school should set up a "teacher excellence fund," enabling teachers to carry out special projects. (4)

- Teachers should be provided with two-week professional development terms, summer study terms with extra pay, and a teacher travel fund in each school. (4)

- A major federal initiative is needed to emphasize the critical importance of quality teachers. (39)

- There should be a national teacher service that offers federal tuition scholarships for teachers in exchange for a three-year period of service. (4)

- Methods of pay and reward systems should be improved. (1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 26, 29, 38)

- Periodically review and revise teacher compensation schemes. (26)

- To increase the pool of highly qualified candidates, state boards should consider across-the-board increases in teacher compensation. (16, 38)

- Average salary should be increased 25 percent over inflation during the next three years. (4)

- Teachers should be rewarded for outstanding performance only. (26)

- Teachers' performance should be reviewed periodically and incentives for self-improvement provided. (26)

- Include teachers, administrators, and the community in planning compensation programs. (26)

- Merit pay has failed in practice; new approaches should be explored. (16)

TEACHERS (cont)

Compensation/Incentives/Recognition (cont)

- Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review. (4, 16, 29)

- Career ladders should be created that distinguish between beginning instructor, experienced teacher, and master teacher. (1, 4, 12, 16, 18, 22, 29)

- Districts should consider extending teachers' contracts and offering financial incentives to recognize those at different levels of responsibility and those serving critical needs in certain subject areas. (12, 16, 29, 32)

- Teachers working with at-risk youth should be given incentives, including salary supplements, promotions, and special recognition. (31)

Worklife

- The employment year for teachers should be extended. (32)

- Teachers should be given 20-day summer planning periods. (18)

- Successful programs are associated with reduced adult/child ratios. (34)

- Teachers' discipline burdens should be reduced by developing and enforcing firm, fair, explicit conduct codes. (12, 16, 26, 29, 33)

- Futher reduce discipline problems by setting up alternative classrooms, programs, and schools for continually disruptive students. (26, 29)

- The work environment of teachers should be improved. (22, 26)

- Teachers should be less isolated; reorganization is needed to allow them to collaborate more. (18)

- Teachers should be treated as professionals, given autonomy and included in making decisions that affect them. (33)

- Teachers should have at least one hour a day for preparation and recordkeeping. (4)

CURRICULUM

Many of the school reform studies focus on the need to make the school experience more demanding academically for all students. Their recommendations range from requiring more literature, history, science, and math to emphasizing higher level thinking skills. Proficiency in English for all students is considered essential by most writers.

Standards/Expectations

- Communities and states should clearly identify skills that schools are expected to impart. (10, 12)
- Educational priorities should be better defined and resources invested where payoffs are greatest. (1, 9, 14)
- Curriculum goals must be clarified. (4)
- Successful urban programs and schools have clearly stated goals and objectives. (34)
- State and local systems should establish firm, explicit, demanding grade requirements. (12)
- Mastery, not age, should guide promotion from grade to grade (12, 29, 38).
- Programs that train for work should be consistent with high graduation standards. (10)
- The central purpose of education is to develop the potential of every student. (9)
- High expectations of students should be set. (33)
- The academic experience should be made more intense and productive. (1, 5, 10)
- Academic standards must be raised at all grade levels and for all ability levels. (10, 38)
- Increased time should be spent studying core subjects. (1, 38)
- Aim for 25 hours of instruction per week. Fewer well-used hours are better than more sterile hours. Aim for 18 percent of these hours spent on literature and language, 18 percent on math and science, 15 percent on social studies, 15 percent on the arts, 15 percent on career preparation, and 10 percent on electives. (18)

CURRICULUM (cont)

Standards (cont)

- In grades K-6, at least 60 minutes a day should be devoted to mathematics and 30 minutes to science. (32)

- Schools need richer substance and greater motivational power in all disciplines; elimination of "soft" and nonessential courses; mastery of skills beyond the basics (e.g., problem solving, analysis, interpretation, and persuasive writing). (12, 18, 32)

- Teachers should raise their expectations of Hispanic students, especially in the area of academic achievement. (21, 30)

Requirements

- All secondary students should take at least 3 years of math, science, and technology. All secondary schools should offer advanced mathematics and science. (32)

- Graduation requirements should include 4 years of English, 2 years of mathematics and science, and 2 years of history and social studies. College-bound students should have 3 years of mathematics and science and 2 years of a foreign language. (16)

- Requirements should include language, culture, and socio-political institutions. (5)

- In grades 7 and 8, a full year of mathematics and science should be required. (32)

- Graduation requirements should be raised. (1, 32)

- All seniors should complete an independent project. (4)

Content/Levels

- Priority should be given to preschool programs and those that address the special needs of young adolescents. (9)

- Students should have opportunities to enroll in employment and training programs. (10)

- Education about employment and postsecondary educational opportunities should begin early (before the end of elementary school). (10, 22)

- Employability should not be confused with vocationalism. Employability requires problem-solving skills, command of the English language, and the ability to acquire and apply new knowledge. (Research has shown that all but the feeble minded can learn these skills.) (3, 9, 18, 35)

CURRICULUM (cont)

Content/Levels (cont)

- The core curriculum should include literature; arts; foreign language; history of western and nonwestern civilization, groups and institutions; science; mathematics; and technology. (4)

- The core subjects should not be a common set of topics, but a common set of concepts, principles, skills, and ways of knowing. (18)

- For college-bound students, significantly more time should be devoted to the basics, including English, mathematics, science, social studies, computer science, and foreign languages. In addition, students in grades 1-12 should have a rigorous program in the fine arts, performing arts, and vocational education. (7, 29)

- Students need skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning, and studying. (7)

- The most important objective of K-12 education is development of literacy in the English language. (4, 6, 39)

- Writing is of critical importance. (4, 16)

- Recognize the importance of bilingual education and bilingualism. (21, 28)

- To head off teen pregnancy, begin early to teach children about their physical and emotional growth. (33)

- Programs must meet the needs of the whole child within the context of school, family, and community. (8, 31)

- Every student should also develop proficiency in a second language. (39)

- Teachers say they are teaching higher order skills, but they are not. Facts must be tied to concepts. (18)

- Schools must develop a variety of intelligences--linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. (35)

- Mathematical and scientific literacy for all students should be improved. (11, 16)

- The most able students should develop advanced skills, including foreign languages. (11)

CURRICULUM (cont)

Content/Levels (cont)

- All students should study the same three-part course. The course should include (1) acquisition of organized knowledge by means of lectures and responses, textbooks, and other aids in the areas of language, literature, fine arts, mathematics, natural science, history, geography, and other social studies; (2) development of intellectual skills and learning skills by coaching, exercises, and supervised practice in reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculating, problem solving, observing, measuring, estimating, and exercising critical judgment; (3) enlarged understanding of ideas and values through Socratic questioning and active participation in discussions of books and other works of art and involvement in artistic activities. (3)

- Provide a curriculum that helps students gain positive racial identities. (10, 28, 30)

- Drug and alcohol counseling programs should be provided. They should begin early; develop skills in assertiveness, peer resistance, and critical thinking; integrate prevention activities into family, school, community life, and teacher training; and form alliances to combat substance abuse. (10, 31)

- There should be increased emphasis on extracurricular activities. (1, 8)

Resources

- Textbooks should be evaluated on their ability to present challenging material and on publishers' required evaluations of effectiveness. (29)

- Textbook selection should be transferred back to local districts. (4)

- More source materials and fewer textbooks should be used. (4)

- Course materials must be revitalized. (8, 12)

Assessment

- Grades should be reliable indicators of readiness for futher study. (29)

- Quality assurance should be provided through testing programs for minimum competency, promotion, and graduation. (1, 6, 32, 38)

- Monitor the impact of state-mandated testing programs on students who are different. (28)

- More attention must be given to the purposes and relevance of student testing. (6)

CURRICULUM (cont)

Assessment (cont)

- Language proficiency should be assessed before high school and summer remediation provided if necessary. (4)

- Testing programs should be linked to carefully designed programs of remediation and enrichment for students who need special help. (12, 31, 38)

- Long-term evaluation of program success and participants' progress is essential. (8, 33)

EQUITY

There is a general agreement that schools should have high expectations of all students. For special populations, however, it is essential to provide remediation, alternative settings, second-chance programs, and work-related opportunities to make sure that these youngsters meet school learning standards.

- School systems (local and state) should increase the participation of women and minorities in courses related to careers in which they are under represented. (Twenty-five states are doing this now in new math, engineering, and science.) (1, 12)

- Female and minority students should be prepared for jobs with futures. (11, 28)

- Have high standards for all students. Provide necessary support to disadvantaged students. (16, 24, 28, 33, 38)

- Set deadlines for bringing students up to standard. (24)

- Schools should set concrete goals for disadvantaged students early in their school careers. Progress should be measured against these goals. (24)

- Schools and teachers should be held accountable for meeting goals related to improving performance of disadvantaged students. If goals are not met, troubleshooting teams should be brought in to analyze the problem and recommend action. (24)

- Districts should consider redeploying current resources to meet goals related to improving performance of disadvantaged students (e.g., underwrite remediation programs with money normally spent for children to repeat grades). (24)

- Schools should respond to disadvantaged children with care and concern--not with punishment. (24)

- Schools should commit to giving students from non-English speaking backgrounds effective instruction appropriate to their backgrounds as early as possible. (24, 33)

- Non-English speaking students should be helped to acquire skills in standard English. (16, 21, 24, 28)

- Second-chance programs should be offered to give dropouts opportunities to complete their education. (4, 31, 33)

- Retention and reentry programs for dropouts should combine work experience with basic skills. (8)

- Programs for dropouts should operate in an alternative setting that focuses on improving their motivation, skills, and self-esteem. (8, 31)

PARTNERSHIPS/RESPONSIBILITIES

There are proposals that call for cooperation at local, state and federal levels. Specific suggestions for cooperation and for responsibilities at various levels fall into the following categories.

Cooperation

- Federal, state, and local jurisdictions should work together to meet the needs of special populations. (29)
- States and districts should develop long-term agendas for reform. (10, 18, 35)
- Organizations should not merely react to crisis but try to anticipate and respond appropriately to changes in society. (35)
- State and local officials--including school board members, governors, and legislators--have primary responsibility for governing and financing schools and incorporating reforms. (29)
- Educators, parents, and public officials at all levels are called on to help bring about reforms. (10, 14, 16, 18, 24, 29)
- A new coalition to support schools is needed. This coalition should include business, labor, civic leaders, parents, educators, and school boards. (4, 9, 12, 18, 28, 30, 31)
- Ask colleges and universities to help plan the curriculum. (6)

School

- School decision making and management should be shared by principals, teachers, parents, students, and other school personnel. (8, 33)
- Greater trust should be placed in the initiative of individual schools. Teachers and administrators should have increased decision-making power. (3, 9, 18, 33)
- Reform should begin where learning actually takes place--in the individual school, in the classroom, and in the interaction between teacher and student. (9)
- Schools should make the best possible use of resources.
- Schools should publicize their desire to work more closely with parents. (10)
- Schools should provide parents of adolescents with information about physical and emotional development of that age group. (28)
- Positive reinforcement and community recognition should be provided parents who take part in early childhood programs. (31)

PARTNERSHIPS/RESPONSIBILITIES (cont)

School (cont)

- Alternatives to suspension should include parent conferences, in-school suspension and counseling. (33)

- Promote attendance through clear incentives and sanctions. (29, 33)

- Inform parents about truancy, perhaps through electronic telephone programs, which are cost effective. (33)

District

- Technology in schools should be up to date. (8, 10, 18)

- School districts and legislatures should consider longer school days and years. (12, 32, 33)

- Days should be 7 hours long and school years should be between 200 and 220 days. (29)

- Effective use of time already available should be the top priority. Only when this is achieved should proposals to extend the school year be considered. (16, 38)

- Lower the maximum number of absences allowed (because students tend to take the maximum number). (16, 33)

- Cities need to recognize the severity of school facility problems. (10, 34)

- Realize that the public's perception of education is affected by the physical condition of schools; at the same time, help the public understand that good educational programs can take place in less attractive buildings. (10)

State

- State plans for improving education, K-12, should be put in effect as soon as possible. (This is being done in 46 states already.) These should involve broad coalitions and hearings in the community and should deal with such issues as improving the teaching profession, integrating technology into instruction, upgrading the curriculum, strengthening graduation standards, raising teacher certification requirements, promoting business involvement, and working on ways to finance excellence in the schools. (1, 31)

- States should organize task forces with broad community representation to study the dropout problem, assess current approaches, determine the consequences of dropping out, set goals and a timetable for reaching them, and develop a policy. (31)

PARTNERSHIPS/RESPONSIBILITIES (cont)

State (cont)

- The state should lead and challenge, setting forth clear expectations; offering moral and financial support, technical assistance, coordinated data gathering by various agencies; clearing roadblocks; giving reform legitimacy; developing tools for renewal; and disseminating research knowledge. (9, 10, 18, 38)

- In some states, new regulations govern student learning outcomes, course frameworks, basic curriculum content, and annual school improvement plans. (1)

- Above all, take risks--cut red tape, restructure bureaucracies, create a competitive climate for ideas, and reward people who take chances. (14)

- States should refrain from excessive regulation, centralization, and control of schools. But they should set standards, monitor achievement, and intervene if schools fail to perform. (9, 28)

- Incentives and opportunities for carrying on and replicating successful programs should be provided at state and federal levels.

- State and federal governments should remove barriers that exist in current policies--barriers that prevent the replication of successful programs.(14)

- Each governor should appoint a broadly inclusive task force on education for economic growth. This group should develop a plan for improving K-12 education. (12)

Federal

- Incentives and opportunities for carrying on and replicating successful programs should be provided at state and federal levels.

- State and federal governments should remove barriers that exist in current policies--barriers that prevent the replication of successful programs.(14)

- The National Science Foundation should lead in promoting curriculum evaluation and development for math, science, and technology in cooperation with teachers, business, and education. (32)

Business

- Business should become a driving force for educating dropouts. (8, 28, 31)

PARTNERSHIPS/RESPONSIBILITIES (cont)

Business (cont)

- Business can provide a volunteer tutorial program, enrichment opportunities, cash awards for outstanding teachers, grants for outstanding principals, and training facilities. (4)

- Computer industry executives can develop plans that help schools use technology. (32)

- The public and private sectors should commit to provide jobs within the city limits to students and their families. (10)

- Every job should provide opportunities to develop character and self-esteem. (14)

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Several proposals call for parent involvement in the schooling process. Parents are viewed as a key group to successful schooling. (9, 10, 31, 34) Specific suggestions follow:

- Citizens should hold educators responsible for providing the leadership necessary to bring about reforms. (29)
- Parents need to be involved in both planning and service delivery. (16, 21, 28, 31, 34)
- Programs should help parents learn how to prepare their children for a better future. (8, 10, 24, 28, 30, 31)
- If necessary, teach parents how to read. (33)
- Adults should also be given a second chance to be educated and have meaningful work. (31)
- Parents should be allowed greater access to schools and should become more committed to involvement in the education of their children. (1, 21, 30))
- Schools should publicize their desire to work more closely with parents. (10)
- The central office should coordinate parent involvement. (10)
- Parents need to be involved in both planning and service delivery. (16, 21, 28, 31, 34)
- Parent links should be forged early, preferably in preschool. (33)
- Parents should be trained and supported to work with their children to improve academic skills and attitudes towards education and themselves. (10)
- Teachers should be trained to work with parents. (10)
- Educational materials should be developed for use at home. (10)
- Programs and activities should be arranged to fit parents' work, day care, and transportation needs. (10)
- Cities should have more parent groups. (10)
- Schools should provide parents of adolescents with information about physical and emotional development of that age group. (28)
- Positive reinforcement and community recognition should be provided parents who take part in early childhood programs. (31)
- Funding for parent involvement should be increased at all levels and made more targeted, consistent, and flexible. (10)

FUNDING

There is general recognition by several national reform proposals that there will be a need for additional funding (8, 9, 10, 31, 34) for educational reform. While there is no agreement on specific funding requirements, the following suggestions are made:

- Any plan for major improvements that does not recognize the need for additional resources over a sustained period is doomed to failure. (8, 9, 10, 31, 34)

- Magnet programs should enjoy continuity of funding. (8)

- Instruction needs more money, while administration and bureaucracy need less. (9)

- Citizens should provide the fiscal support and stability required to bring about needed reforms. (29)

- The resources essential to improving the public schools should come from state support, local support, corporate and business contributions, and local education foundations, which are providing smaller business with a new mechanism for supporting local schools. (1)

- States must continue to secure more equitable distribution of educational resources. (12)

- Schools should be more conscious of how resources are allocated across subjects and how time is spent. (18)

- Governments should establish "Blueprints for Prevention" (of school dropouts) and in doing so, they should accept the "Five Percent Challenge"--i.e., ensure that at least five percent of the state's resources are spent on prevention efforts. (31)

- States should expand the funding base of districts that establish adult education programs. These programs can help lessen the numbers who must rely on welfare. (31)

- States should recognize that federal funds for compensatory education are add ons and do not relieve states of the responsibility to provide these services. (28)

- Local districts should commit their support to providing compensatory education regardless of fluctuations in state and federal funding. (28)

- Funding for parent involvement should be increased at all levels and made more targeted, consistent, and flexible. (10)

- The public and private sectors should provide support to train secondary school science and mathematics teachers. (5, 32)

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION/STRUCTURE

To meet the needs of a district's diverse student population, schools may need to provide a variety of structures. These might include schools within schools, accelerated schools (to bring disadvantaged elementary youngsters up to the standard), and magnet schools, to name a few.

- To prevent reliance on welfare, society should provide continued interventions during the individual's life. (31)
- Provide more flexible class scheduling for larger blocks of time. (4)
- Set up residential academies in math and science. (4)
- Set up schools within schools. (4, 18)
- Create four phases of schooling: ages 4-7 (primary), 8-11 (elementary), 12-15 (secondary), 16-18 (service, work/study). (18)
- Create nongraded mini-schools, with four teachers per 100 students. (18)
- Structured learning environments and individual instruction are particularly successful in urban schools. (34)
- Schools should connect with other institutions to provide career education. (4, 11)
- To effectively solve problems of educating the disadvantaged, school systems must be fundamentally restructured. (8, 14)
- Restructuring should include redefining the purpose and organization of schools; the ways they are staffed, managed, and financed; the relation of school to community. (8)
- Lively, enjoyable summer programs and alternative learning environments are needed. (24, 33)
- Systems should identify and support academically gifted students. (12, 38)
- Magnet schools, residential schools, summer camps, concurrent university and high school enrollment, and honors programs are being provided for TAG students in 38 states. (1)
- Magnet programs should be considered because of the special service they can provide at-risk youth. (33)
- If a school fails to respond to reform measures, it may be necessary to close it and transfer students to other schools. (33)

INSTRUCTION

Classroom instruction is the heart of the schooling process. Several reports have suggestions in this area.

Placement/Grouping

- Grouping should be guided by academic progress. (29)
- Avoid rigid ability grouping in middle schools and junior highs. (28)
- The three-track system (academic, vocational, and general) should be abolished. (3, 4, 18, 28)
- To ensure appropriate learning environments, it is important that parents and students can choose among program options. (31)
- Keep children with mild learning difficulties in the regular classroom, and improve service for children with moderate and severe handicaps. (28)

Classes/Class Size

- Classes and schools should be small--in part to encourage bonding with adults. (8, 10, 14, 33)

Methods/Practices

- It is important to encourage a greater variety of teaching styles eliciting more active student involvement. (3, 4, 33)
- Instruction should be interdisciplinary. (4)
- Schedules and teaching methods should be flexible enough to accommodate students with special problems. (8, 12)
- Mastery learning programs should be provided. (18, 24)
- Cooperative learning (students helping one another learn) and peer tutoring should be used with disadvantaged learners. (24)
- Computer-assisted instruction should be considered. (24)
- Much classroom activity for the disadvantaged is repetitive and boring. Instruction should be faster paced and actively engage children's interests so as to increase motivation. Their learning must include concepts, analysis, problem solving, and applications that are interesting. (24, 33)
- Mentor programs should be set up to give students role models in business. (14, 18, 31, 33)

INSTRUCTION (cont)

Methods/Practices (cont)

- Consider adopting the "Accelerated School" concept. The accelerated school is a transitional elementary school that brings disadvantaged youngsters up to grade level by the end of sixth grade--in both basic skills and problem-solving, communication, educational aspirations, and self-concept. The approach builds on strengths, rather than weaknesses. The whole school focuses on accelerating the curriculum and instruction to meet the goal. Decision making is school based. All instruction (even in math) is strongly language based. Peer and adult tutors from the community are used. Parents agree to goals and to daily reading sessions at home and receive process and academic instruction themselves. The school day lasts until 5 p.m., with the last two hours or so devoted to rest, physical activities, the arts, and independent work on assignments. (24, 33)

- Accelerated classes should be provided for gifted students. (4)

- Instructional techniques and incentives should aim to increase motivation and achievement. (31)

- Some schools use posters and t.v. and radio spots to help reduce dropout rates. (33)

- Educational materials should be developed for use at home. (10)

- High school students should be assigned more homework. (29)

- District and state should set firm, explicit, and demanding policies related to homework. (12)

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Guidance counseling must be expanded, with more counselors and fewer students per counselor. (4, 10, 30)

- More career counseling should be provided. (10)

- If necessary, counseling should be offered in elementary schools. (33)

- All staff must help counsel dropouts. (33)

- Transportation options should be provided to help youth get to jobs. (14)

- New structures and procedures may be needed to smooth the transition from school to work. (14, 28)

- Programs for the educationally disadvantaged must include an early, sustained intervention into their lives, both in school and out. (8, 14, 16, 24, 28, 30, 31, 33, 38)

- For potential dropouts, a cohesive program of education, social, health, and career service should be provided with the help of cooperating agencies and businesses. (31)

- Training networks that specialize in at-risk youth should be developed. (14)

- Early intervention should include pre- and post-natal care for teens, followup care for their infants, parent education for both teen moms and dads, family health care, nutrition guidance, child care for poor parents that stresses social development and school readiness, quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, and programs for parents on how to prepare their children for a better future. (8, 10, 24, 28, 31)

- Breakfast and lunch programs should be provided. (24)

- It is important to decide which services should be left to outside agencies. (33)

- Drug and alcohol counseling programs should be provided. They should begin early; develop skills in assertiveness, peer resistance, and critical thinking; integrate prevention activities into family, school, community life, and teacher training; and form alliances to combat substance abuse. (10, 31)

- Drug and alcohol counseling programs should offer support for discipline and attendance policies, materials and specialized support staff. (32, 38)

- States should expand the funding base of districts that establish adult education programs. These programs can help lessen the numbers who must rely on welfare. (31)

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